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SUBJECT: The Bona Fides of Yuriy Ivanovich Nosenko

1. KGB officer Yuriy Ivanovich Nosenko first contacted CIA in Geneva in June 1962. Over the course of five meetings he provided sufficient information to enable the two officers from CIA's Soviet-Russia Division who met him to establish that he was a bona fide source. The major information furnished by him at that time was the identification of a US code technician who had been recruited by the KGB, and the identification of the location of KGB microphones in the US Embassy in Moscow, 52 of which were later found.

2. When CIA's Counterintelligence Staff was informed of Nosenko's 1962 approach, its management regarded this news within the context of what they had been hearing from a KGB defector whom they were then debriefing, Anatoliy Mikhaylovich Golitsyn. Golitsyn, who had defected in December 1961, was a counterintelligence officer who was obsessed with the subject of KGB deception operations. Even though Golitsyn was diagnosed in early 1962 as a "paranoid personality," the CI Staff had complete faith in the validity of his theories and analyses. A sanitized version of Nosenko's information was therefore shown to Golitsyn, who flatly concluded that Nosenko was acting under KGB control. The CI Staff accepted Golitsyn's analysis and persuaded the management of SR Division also to accept it.

3. By the time Nosenko was again heard from, in January 1964, again in Geneva, the management of SR Division and CI Staff was firmly committed to the position that Nosenko was part of a KGB deception operation. Nosenko actually defected on 4 February 1964.

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4. In October 1967 the DCI turned Nosenko's case over to the Office of Security for final resolution, and at the same time the FBI began a review of the information it had obtained from Nosenko. The results of these two very thorough investigations were set forth in a memorandum from the Office of Security dated 1 October 1968 and one from the FBI dated 20 September 1968, both of which concluded that Nosenko was who he claimed to be and was a bona fide defector. Since that time this has been and is the position of CIA.

5. Nosenko was probably the most valuable source of counterintelligence information that the US Government has ever had, and the enormous scope and value of his information attest conclusively to his bona fides as a defector. He identified some 2,000 KGB officers and 300 Soviets who were acting as KGB agents. He provided information on some 238 Americans in whom the KGB had displayed some interest, including many who had been recruited. For example, one of his identifications led to the trial and a sentence of 25 years for US Army Sergeant Robert Lee Johnson. Nosenko also provided information on some 200 foreign nationals in 36 countries in whom the KGB had taken an active interest, and the friendly foreign governments with which we shared this information were able to neutralize a number of important KGB agents as a result. For example, the British were able on the basis of Nosenko's information to identify William John Vassall, a high Admiralty official, as a KGB agent and sentence him to 18 years.

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